

The Ministry Project and Sermon Outline
For Focusing on the Mark Ministries

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CM 7407: Ministry Practicum
March 23, 2017

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Ministry Project

Introduction

Focusing on the Mark Ministries is an online ministry founded by Ryan Marks (who currently resides in Missouri) in 2012. The mission of Focusing on the Mark Ministries is: “to help unbelievers come to know Jesus and to help believers grow in Christ.”¹ The ministry reaches individuals across the world through: an online blog, audio through podcasts, video through a YouTube channel, social media through Facebook and Twitter, as well as email newsletters. The participant of this ministry practicum currently serves as a contributing writer and board member for the ministry, as well as this participant assisted in the leadership efforts to consolidate the ministry site into a single site and blog powered by WordPress, allowing the ministry to more strategically focus its efforts at reaching people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and biblical training. Brother Ryan has served as the ministry field supervisor for the participant involved in the ministry practicum this semester.

Meeting the Need

A handful of ministry needs have been discovered upon the transition and consolidation of Focusing on the Mark Ministries into a single website. First, the ministry could benefit from a solid mini-series of teaching on essential Bible doctrines. This would allow those engaged in the ministry to gain a solid handle on rightly dividing the Word of God. Second, while the ministry has been actively distributing content to its various ministry channels, offering the ability for those engaged in the ministry to send in their biblical questions to the ministry would be a method in which the ministry could better dialogue communication with those engaged with the

¹ Ryan Marks, “About.”<http://www.focusingonthemarkministries.com/about/> Accessed March 28, 2017.

ministry. Third, because the majority of the ministry team communicates with each other in an online environment, leveraging online Bible study tools to allow the ministry team to more effectively study the Word of God together and pray together and strengthen the ministry team's spiritual walk with the Lord in a community environment. Finally, the ministry is currently a division of Brother Ryan's for-profit organization (Marks Enterprises, LLC), in which the ministry has not been self-sustaining. Examining how the ministry can transition into a non-profit organization, as well as efforts to ensure the ministry can become self-sustaining, is a critical goal of the ministry to ensure it can continue to reach others with the Gospel and biblical teaching.

Goals

To fulfill the above ministry needs, a series of goals were planned for this ministry practicum. First, the participant involved in the ministry practicum is to complete a four-part series of videos and corresponding handouts on essential Bible doctrines to be published to the ministry's blog and YouTube channel. Second, a new ministry is to be launched, named "Ask FMM", which allows those who engage with the ministry to email biblical questions to the ministry team. Third, an internal and public group page on Faithlife, a social network community integrated with Logos Bible Software, is to be created to allow the ministry team to study the Word of God together, share prayer requests together, etc., as well as examine how Faithlife can be used as another ministry outreach channel. Finally, a board meeting is to be held to determine how the ministry can transition to a non-profit organization, as well as to discuss how the ministry can become self-sustaining.

Creating and Implementing Ministry

The majority of the time spent during the ministry practicum has been in the preparation of the handouts and videos for the four-part series on essential Bible doctrines. This task has proven to be more challenging and time-consuming than originally planned. However, the end result will be a series of high-quality, solid biblical content that will enrich a wide audience in major need of instruction in Bible doctrines. The handouts are in-depth and cover deep doctrinal

discussions, yet are presented in a clear, understandable manner for those who have never experienced formal biblical training in Bible doctrines. The videos are being filmed using a combination of a webcam and computer screen recorder to allow the participant to teach through the material using the participant's Bible software. This allows the participant to include some practical training in Bible study methods in addition to presenting the doctrinal instruction in the videos. When completed, the series will consist of: the doctrine of the Bible (Bibliology), the doctrine of Jesus Christ (Christology), the doctrine of the church (Ecclesiology), and the doctrine of end times (Eschatology). A small video on recommended resources for Bible study will conclude the series. The participant has completed the handouts for this portion of the ministry and is involved in production of the videos.

The second ministry goal to be completed was launching "Ask FMM", a ministry that allows those engaged with the ministry to ask biblical questions to the ministry team. "Ask FMM" has officially been launched through the ministry. A shared email inbox was developed by the participant of the ministry practicum to allow the ministry team to collectively review biblical questions that arrive into the ministry. The email address, askfmm@focusingonthemarkministries.com, is also simple enough to share on podcasts and video channels used by the ministry. A contact form was also created by the participant to allow those visiting the ministry website to ask biblical questions through the contact form. The contact form is located at: <http://www.focusingonthemarkministries.com/askfmm/>. The contact form also utilizes technologies to prevent spammers from using the contact form as a means to distribute spam and junk mail to the ministry. The participant announced the new "Ask FMM" ministry on the ministry blog and on social media. Brother Ryan has announced the new ministry on the ministry's YouTube channel, audio podcasts, and Facebook Live. The participant will also work to further announce the new ministry on Facebook Live and the YouTube Channel, as well as utilize Facebook Live to announce the release of the essential Bible doctrines videos. Questions submitted through "Ask FMM" will originally be answered personally by email to the person who asked the question. Answers to the questions may also be shared publicly through the blog,

social media, audio podcasts, and videos. The privacy of the individual will always be respected in which the ministry will not publicly share the individual's name without permission from them.

A board meeting was held on a weekend in March to discuss how to transition the ministry from a division of Brother Ryan's for-profit corporation to its own non-profit organization. Discussions were also held to determine methods by which to ensure the ministry can become self-sustaining in the year of 2017. The participant of the ministry practicum agreed to bring in the services of his organization's general counsel (corporate attorney) to determine the recommended method for transitioning the ministry into a non-profit organization. The participant also agreed to ask other ministry leaders and his organization's chief marketing officer for suggestions on how the ministry can become self-sustaining in 2017. Some methods were proposed during the board meeting (PayPal donations, an online bookstore, affiliate programs, etc.), although more discussion is needed to form a solid roadmap on the direction the ministry will take to become self-sustaining.

The participant will also be creating both public and internal group pages on Faithlife, a Christian social network community integrated with Logos Bible Software, to allow the ministry team to study the Word of God together, share prayer requests together, and grow together spiritually in an online community environment. The ministry will also evaluate how to best leverage Faithlife as another ministry channel in which it can distribute biblical teaching and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the participant has been actively and regularly contributing content to the ministry blog in addition to the other ministry projects mentioned above. The majority of the content submitted to the ministry blog has stemmed from papers written by the participant in seminary. Some original content, as well as a weekly Scripture post on Sundays, has also been posted by the participant.

Evaluating the Results

Because the video series on Bible doctrines is still in the production stages and has not been released by the ministry, there has not been a way to directly evaluate the results of the videos on Bible doctrines. The participant will followup with his professor in a video call on Skype at the end of the semester to update his professor on an evaluation of the results of the video series. However, Brother Ryan has reviewed all of the handouts produced by the participant. He has offered quality feedback to the participant and believes the handouts in their current state will be effective and clear in their presentation of essential Bible doctrines. He and the participant are excited about evaluating the results of this series.

While “Ask FMM” has officially launched through the ministry, no one has of yet submitted any biblical questions to the ministry. This new ministry will likely begin to experience more questions when the video series on Bible doctrines is launched, as well as the participant will work to further promote the new ministry to other avenues in order to encourage individuals to submit biblical questions to the ministry. The participant will remain involved on the ministry team after the completion of the ministry practicum. Therefore, he can continue to evaluate the results of this ministry long-term.

The board members are pleased with the discussions made during the previous board meeting on transitioning the ministry to a non-profit organization, as well as the discussions made to present methods for ensuring the ministry becomes self-sustaining in 2017. More progress on this front will need to be made, but the ministry is moving in the right direction and will continue to prayerfully evaluate the direction the Lord leads the ministry.

Once the Faithlife groups for the ministry have been created and launched, the ministry will evaluate the results of them to determine how to best utilize them both internally as well as publicly as another ministry channel. The ministry team is excited about the creation of the Faithlife groups and has been engaged in researching how to best utilize them when they are launched.

Lastly, since the participant will remain on the ministry team and board of directors upon the completion of the ministry practicum, the participant will continue to submit regular content to the ministry blog and continue to evaluate the results of the ministry practicum long-term. The ministry practicum is not an end to the participant's ministry work with Focusing on the Mark Ministries. It is more of a beginning into new avenues for the ministry, in which the work and evaluation of these new avenues will continue for a long period of time.

Accountability and Leadership

The participant is thankful to be a member of the ministry team for Focusing on the Mark Ministries and is thankful for the opportunity to contribute solid biblical content to the ministry. Brother Ryan has served as an excellent leader, mentor, accountability leader, and ministry field supervisor during this ministry practicum. Brother Ryan regularly met with the participant via video conferencing on Skype, as well as regularly communicated with the participant via email and social media. He continued to encourage the participant in fulfilling the proposed ministry goals, continually prayed for the participant, as well as helped the ministry participant strive for biblical and academic excellence in the content created in this ministry practicum by offering solid and needed feedback. It has been a spiritually rewarding ministry practicum and one that will produce solid results for the kingdom of God. The participant is also thankful that he will continue with the ministry after the practicum to see where the Lord takes the ministry next.

Dr. Coleman has been an excellent professor this semester to the participant involved in the ministry practicum. He has regularly met with the participant in video conferencing via Skype, has continually prayed for the participant, as well as continued to encourage and mentor the participant. It has been a blessing this semester to be a student in Dr. Coleman's course and finish strong for the Lord in this final semester in seminary.

Conclusion

It has been a privilege and honor to serve the Lord and Focusing on the Mark Ministries during this ministry practicum. It will be exciting to continue to serve the ministry and further

evaluate the results of the ministry goals fulfilled during this ministry practicum. Providing the ministry with a solid series of instruction on Bible doctrines, as well as fulfilling the other goals outlined in this ministry practicum, has been a rewarding experience and a blessing. It will be exciting to determine where the Lord takes Focusing on the Mark Ministries next, a journey that will be lived walking daily in obedience to the will and commands of Jesus Christ.

Sermon Outline

Title

The Treasure of Your Heart

Passage

Luke 12:22-34

Historical Background

The Gospel of Luke and its companion book of Acts were likely written by Luke who was a physician and traveling companion of Paul. The Gospel of Luke was primarily addressed to an influential individual named Theophilus. Luke likely had a broad and universal audience in mind with the Gospel of Luke, primarily writing to Gentiles, but also including Jews in his audience.² The purpose for the Gospel of Luke was to provide an accurate apologetic for the Christian faith and the person and work of Jesus Christ.³

Main Idea

Jesus Christ instructed His disciples not to anxiously worry about earthly riches but to instead seek spiritual treasures in heaven.

² Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), The Gospel According to Luke.

³ D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 211–12.

Significant Words

Kingdom: Greek is *basileia*.⁴ Refers to the “act of ruling” in terms of God’s royal reign (known as the “kingdom of God”).⁵ This kingdom of God is a gift from God to the disciples of Jesus Christ, and ultimately, to all believers in Jesus Christ.⁶ The kingdom of God is ultimately an eschatological kingdom, “opposed to everything present and earthly, to everything here and now”.⁷ The phrase “kingdom of God” is frequently used by Gospel writers such as Luke as an eschatological kingdom in which ultimately will be fulfilled by Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

Treasure: Greek is *thēsauros*. Refers to “that which is stored up, treasure”, specifically treasure in heaven.⁸ Unlike earthly treasures, this spiritual treasure in heaven will not wear out, will not be destroyed, nor can it be stolen.⁹ It is a Jewish term that refers “figuratively of the inner store in the heart of man”.¹⁰ Luke’s use of the term is to contrast the emphasis of earthly versus heavenly treasures in this passage.

Introduction

A couple of years ago I walked through the estate of one of the richest women in our city

⁴ All Greek words are transliterated using SBL Greek transliteration in Logos Bible Software’s Text Converter.

⁵ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 168.

⁶ Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2014), 488.

⁷ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 584.

⁸ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, 456.

⁹ Silva, 457.

¹⁰ Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, 137.

who passed away a few years ago. Her estate was in the process of being sold. As I ventured through the halls and rooms of this massive estate, I experienced her overwhelming abundance of earthly treasures she had collected over the years. All of her vast earthly wealth was left behind for her family after she passed away for them to sort through and decide how to best handle it all.

While all of her earthly treasures remained on the earth after she passed away, this lady managed to also store up vast spiritual treasures in heaven, and she is now experiencing the rewards of those spiritual treasures. She was a devoted Christian who loved the Lord and His Word. She engaged in daily, vigorous Bible study, and she witnessed to as many people as possible who crossed her path. Her earthly treasures are of no value to her now, but her spiritual treasures stored up in heaven are of more precious value than any earthly treasures she collected while alive on the earth.

Transition

As we come to our passage in the Gospel of Luke who wrote an accurate defense of the Christian faith to both an influential individual named Theophilus, as well as a broader universal audience of Gentiles and Jews, Luke is presenting us with an encounter of Jesus teaching His disciples concerning the importance and priority of spiritual treasures over earthly riches.

Stating Main Idea

Jesus Christ instructed His disciples not to anxiously worry about earthly riches but to instead seek spiritual treasures in heaven. Most people struggle with anxiety on some level, whether concerning financial issues, emotional needs, or some need a better understanding of the will of God. However, there is no need for us to worry because Jesus holds it all in His hand and guides His people. We have a secure salvation and a sovereign Lord which gives us great confidence. When we devote our focus and attention on seeking spiritual treasures above earthly riches, then the Lord ensures everything else rightly falls into place.¹¹

¹¹. I want to thank my ministry supervisor, Ryan Marks, for his assistance with this section

Question

How can we as Christians seek spiritual treasures in heaven instead of anxiously worrying about earthly riches?

Supporting Ideas

1. Christians are to recall God's provision.

Explanation: Because God graciously provides for us, we have no reason to be anxious about earthly provisions such as food and clothing. John MacArthur wonderfully discussed our focus on the Lord this way: "The priority for those in His kingdom is to glorify God by fulfilling the purpose for which He has called them."¹² He goes on to say that the "absence of worry is to continually characterize believers. They need not worry because their trustworthy and loving heavenly Father...will provide everything they need."¹³ While Christians need not worry or be anxious concerning earthly provisions, this does not mean that Christians are to be reckless or careless. We are not to passively sit by and expect God to provide for us while we act in a lazy and careless manner.¹⁴ God has called each of us to work in a vocation, and our vocation is a means in which God provides earthly provisions for us such as food and clothing. He also expects that we are actively involved in either gathering and preparing our meals or eating in restaurants, as well as that we take the initiative to acquire our clothing. What the passage emphasizes is not carelessness and laziness, but ensuring we remember that ultimately, all earthly

of the sermon, as well as for recommending a title for this sermon. His wisdom helped me to strengthen this section of the sermon and add additional content to it which it greatly needed.

¹². John MacArthur, *Luke 11–17*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013), 140.

¹³. Ibid.

¹⁴. John G. Butler, *Analytical Bible Expositor: Luke* (Clinton, IA: LBC Publications, 2009), 428.

provisions come from God Himself. He is the one who provides for our needs. Therefore, we need not anxiously worry about our needs being met.

Supporting Scriptures: Luke 12:22-30, Philippians 4:6, 4:19

Illustrations: Jesus provides His disciples with two illustrations concerning recalling God's provision. The first illustration is in the fowls and their dinner. Birds were a common occurrence to the nation of Israel. Countless birds migrate through Israel each year. Ravens were considered unclean by the Mosaic law. Ravens are not able to produce their own supply of food, neither do they store up food for long periods of time. Ravens are solely dependent upon God's provision in order to survive.¹⁵

The second illustration from Jesus Christ to His disciples is in the flowers and their dress. Even King Solomon who was one of the richest individuals upon the earth was not clothed as beautifully as one of the flowers of the field. God in His perfect design as Creator spectacularly clothed the flowers of the field, which testify to His brilliant handiwork. These flowers of the field do absolutely nothing in their own strength to be granted such majestic dress by God.

Application: John MacArthur summarized the illustrations of God's provision well when he said: "Because God's children are much more valuable...than the birds, He will not fail to supply their needs until His purpose for their lives ends and He calls them to glory."¹⁶ He goes onto conclude: "The point of the Lord's illustration is that God prefers His people over the birds and plants that He cares for."¹⁷ If God is able to provide for the fowl's dinner and the flower's dress, how much more can He provide for the needs of His people?

2. Christians are to receive God's province (kingdom).

Explanation: Not only are Christians to recall God's provision, but we are to receive God's province (kingdom) by seeking the kingdom of God. By seeking God's kingdom and

¹⁵. MacArthur, 140–41.

¹⁶. Ibid., 141.

¹⁷. Ibid., 143.

placing our priority upon spiritual treasures above earthly riches, God will ultimately take care of the rest. MacArthur summarized this truth well: “Our heavenly Father knows that we need these material things that the unregenerate so desperately seek. Not only does He know, He also sympathizes, and has unlimited resources and power to meet every need of His children.”¹⁸ When we receive the province (kingdom) of God, we are tapping into the abundant riches of God. First and foremost, we receive the spiritual treasures God provides for us, yet He also promises to meet our earthly needs as well. MacArthur goes onto explain the importance of seeking the kingdom of God: “Simply stated, our focus is not to be on food, clothes, money, houses, cars, or other material possessions, but rather on worshiping, serving, and proclaiming Christ, living obediently to the Word, and pursuing truth, holiness, and love.”¹⁹ He concludes by saying:

The consuming interest of the believer’s life is the kingdom of God, the sphere of salvation where God rules as King and Lord. Everything is to be done for the honor and advance of the lordship of Christ. The Christian life begins with the repentance, self-denial, humility, mourning over sin, and hunger and thirst for righteousness that accompany saving faith, and results in a life of worship, service, and obedience. Those who set their souls to seek the kingdom glories, Jesus promised, will find that God will meet their earthly needs.²⁰

Supporting Scriptures: Luke 12:31, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, Psalm 37:4

Illustration: If you lost your keys, you become consumed trying to find them. You empty draws and look in places you do not normally look, you find things that you forgot about and even some things that you had no idea you owned. When we seek the Lord first, when He becomes our consuming passion of all that we are (Luke 10:27), we eliminate distractions as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3). Focus requires refusing to be distracted by the world. Focus means to be single minded. As we are focused on the Lord, serving Him with all

¹⁸. MacArthur, 144.

¹⁹. Ibid.

²⁰. Ibid., 144–45.

that we are and be the light He has called us to be wherever we are at the moment, the Lord takes care of everything else. It does not mean that Christians should not plan or schedule their lives, as the Scriptures instruct us to make the most of our time (Ephesians 5:16). Paul attempted three mission fields and was resisted by the Holy Spirit before the Lord led his team to Macedonia. We have no record that Paul had a strategic strategy for reaching the known Roman world in his lifetime, but as he served Jesus, made disciples and followed the Spirit, God did exactly that. Let us surrender the desire for our own plans (Proverbs 3:5-6) and trust the Lord. The true issue with choosing to focus on the Lord is surrendering control, truly letting Jesus be Lord of our life and trusting Him.²¹

Application: When we seek the kingdom of God, we shift our focus from our earthly concerns to our heavenly Father who is able to provide all our needs. Butler has given us solid wisdom when he said: “Instead of being concerned about worldly cares, we need to be concerned about spiritual concerns.”²² When our focus is upon God, His kingdom, and His righteousness, all our earthly concerns pale in comparison, and He takes the initiative to work everything out for our good and His glory.

3. Christians are to remember God’s promise.

Explanation: When we as Christians receive God’s province (kingdom), we also remember God’s promise that He desires to give us His kingdom as a gift to us and to provide for all of our needs, both spiritual and earthly. MacArthur reminds us that God has promised to provide the treasures of His kingdom to His people: “It is God’s good pleasure to grant the kingdom in all its fullness to His children. All of its riches of righteousness, peace, and joy...are

²¹. I want to thank my ministry supervisor, Ryan Marks, for providing me with this illustration. I made some minor adjustments to the illustration and added a Scripture to it the Lord laid upon my heart, but I want to give the credit to Brother Ryan as the one who provided me with this excellent illustration.

²². Butler, 428.

theirs as ‘heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ’ (Rom. 8:17), with whom He will ‘freely give [them] all things’.²³

Supporting Scriptures: Luke 12:31-34, 9:23

Illustration: “In *Pentecostal Evangel* pastor Dale Alan Robbins writes of an occasion early in his ministry when he and his wife were barely making ends meet.”²⁴ It illustrates well remembering God’s promise that when we seek God’s kingdom and spiritual treasures first, God will take care of our physical needs:

When I arrived home, my wife Jerri saw the worry on my face. I had \$3 in my wallet and there was one can of soup in the cupboard. After our meager supper, I quietly leafed through my Bible in the dim light. Tears streamed from my eyes. I wondered whether we were really called by God. I felt like giving up. Then I thought, What alternative do I have? Who else but God do I have to turn to?

I read the verse: “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).... Encouraged, yet still burdened, Jerri and I knelt at opposite ends of the little trailer to seek God. Into the night we prayed, until sleep finally overtook us.

I was awakened by a pounding at the door. From the window I could see the brilliant orange sunrise behind the city skyline. A fresh, white blanket of snow now covered the ground. Again, the knocking came.

“Who is it?” I asked.

A mystery voice replied, “I’ve got something for you.”

Cautiously, I opened the door. There stood a short man with a grin on his face and two brown grocery bags in his arms. He quickly shoved the bags in the doorway, then turned, and walked away.

Jerri joined me. Stunned, we began to look through the bags. There were bread, meat, canned goods, and several cans of my favorite soup. They were the same items and brands we normally purchased. There was also a can of shaving cream. Who knew I had just used my last ounce of shaving cream? On the bottom of one sack was an envelope with cash. (Later I discovered it was the precise amount needed to fill our gas tank to get us to our next destination.)

On that wintry Saturday morning in Syracuse, my wife and I wept in our trailer and thanked God for hearing and answering our prayer. No one on the planet knew about our need; only our Lord God Almighty. And he dispatched a little grinning man to minister to us.²⁵

²³. MacArthur, 146–47.

²⁴. Craig Brian Larson, *750 Engaging Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers & Writers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 433.

²⁵. Ibid., 433–34.

Application: Jesus Christ concludes His instruction to His disciples with these words: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:34) When we seek God’s kingdom and spiritual treasures above earthly riches, then our hearts and wills are in step with the will of God, and we gain the satisfaction and joy that the world cannot give nor take away. MacArthur beautifully summarizes the conclusion of this passage:

Salvation comes only from embracing Jesus the Messiah by grace through faith (John 1:12; 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; cf. Eph. 2:8–9). Salvation is for the desperate, the humble, who mourn over their sin and hunger and thirst for righteousness. But how a person views money and possessions is a measure of the genuineness of repentance and faith. Anything that vies for a person’s allegiance to Christ is a roadblock to salvation. As Jesus succinctly put it, “You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Those who would enter the kingdom of God must submit unreservedly to the rule of the King. They store up their treasure securely in heaven, rather than on earth, understanding that, as the missionary and martyr Jim Elliot wrote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Elisabeth Elliot, I [New York: Harper & Row, 1979], 247).²⁶

Conclusion

Because we have our loving Father in heaven who has promised to take care of all of our needs, we have no need to be anxious concerning earthly needs. When we take our focus off of earthly riches and instead focus on the kingdom of God and spiritual treasures in heaven, we receive treasures that cannot be stolen nor can they deteriorate. Focusing on the kingdom of God and on spiritual treasures places us in the proper perspective, eliminates anxiety, and focuses the peace of God. John MacArthur stated this truth beautifully: “The best the world can hope for in superficially dealing with anxiety is to manage it and mask its impact. The Lord Jesus Christ, however, offers a radically different solution to anxiety—He promises to eliminate it.”²⁷

²⁶. MacArthur, 147–48.

²⁷. Ibid., 138.

Invitation

The only way one can truly seek the kingdom of God and focus on spiritual treasures is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, as the apostle of John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote down the words of Christ in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”²⁸ For those listening to this message who do not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, today is the day to place your faith by grace in Jesus Christ’s atoning death on the cross for your sins, as Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, inspired by the Holy Spirit, in 2 Corinthians 6:2: “behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Paul also states in his letter to the church in Rome in Romans 10:9: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Do you believe that? If you do but have never prayed it directly to the Lord, allow me to lead you in the following prayer:

Father, I know that I am a sinner. My sin deserves judgment and eternal separation from You. But I also believe and know in my heart and now confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins and paid my sin debt in full once and for all. I believe and know in my heart that Jesus Christ rose bodily from the grave. I accept His payment in full for my sins and invite Him to enter my heart and become my personal Lord and Savior. I thank You for saving me, Jesus. Begin now to make me a new creation, born again, born from above, with a new spiritual birth walking in Your will, Your peace, and Your presence. In the holy, wonderful, and precious name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

If you prayed the above prayer, you are now gladly a part of the family of God. You have an eternal home awaiting you in heaven, and a new spiritual life in Christ.

²⁸. Parts of this invitation have been adapted from a previous invitation I wrote in another sermon on Ephesians.

For those listening to this message who have already been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, today is the day to begin actively seeking the kingdom of God and storing up spiritual treasures in heaven. Ask the Lord to speak to your heart and show you His will for your life in areas where you can make a difference for the Lord. Whether that is giving of your time, talents, spiritual gifts, or finances, the Lord has called each of us to use what He has blessed us with to further His kingdom. Take this opportunity to go before the Lord and allow him to use you for His glory.

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